



One Twin Pines Lane
Belmont, CA 94002



The Belmont-San Carlos Fire Department wants to hear from you!

We'd like to be able to respond to the community's questions or comments about local firefighting and rescue needs.

Comments: _____

Questions: _____

☐ My organization would like to host a presentation from the Fire Department.

Contact Name: _____

Name of Organization: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____



MESSAGE


From the Fire Chief

The Belmont-San Carlos Fire Department provides all-risk fire and emergency services to the Cities of Belmont and San Carlos as well as the incorporated Harbor Industrial Area.

The Fire Department, particularly in the last three years, has had to do more with less. Facing budget constraints, the Fire Department was forced to lay off seven firefighters as well as staff who ensure that our firefighters are well trained. These staffing cuts forced an engine out of service.

The Belmont-San Carlos Fire Department is committed to operating a highly efficient Fire Department but cannot provide the level of service that the Fire Commission or I believe necessary to adequately protect our community. That is why we are considering an assessment. I will be sending you more information in the next couple of weeks. Feel free to call me with any questions you may have, at 650-802-4254.

Sincerely,


Douglas Fry
Fire Chief

FIREFIGHTING & RESCUE Report to Belmont Residents

Nearly three years ago, the Belmont-San Carlos Fire Department, formerly known as South County Fire Protection Authority, was forced to reduce firefighting positions and 9-1-1 service level capabilities. These cuts eliminated one engine company, paramedic staffing on another, and staff to ensure our firefighters are well trained and prepared. The current revenues available to the Fire Department are not sufficient for this level of service.

As outlined further in this report, your Fire Department has taken many steps to live within its means. Nonetheless, increased 9-1-1 demands, the need to provide quality and reliable fire protection coverage while making budget cuts, now mean that local homeowners are being asked to consider an assessment to fund future fire protection services.

Understanding the importance of continuing to provide quality and reliable fire protection and prevention services while maintaining local oversight of the fire department, this June, an important agreement was reached between San Carlos and Belmont. The agreement calls for strengthening your Fire Department and the services they provide to you on the condition that additional funds are made available.



Shortly, all property owners in Belmont will be asked to consider the merits of a fire protection assessment through an all mail-in ballot. Lastly, the pages that follow contain more information about your Fire Department and the proposed fire protection assessment.

Facts about firefighting and rescue needs

What steps has the Fire Department made to be more efficient?

In 1979 the Cities of Belmont and San Carlos merged their Fire Departments into what was then known as South County Fire Department. It was specifically formed to be more efficient and to save money. At that time, there were six fire stations and nine firefighting companies. Upon implementation, duplication of staff was eliminated, six stations were reduced to four, and nine firefighting companies reduced to five. In the last three years, the Department has made further cuts to staffing and equipment to live within the limited revenues available. There are currently three stations with one engine company at each, and one station with a truck company.

What are the needs of the Belmont-San Carlos Fire Departments?

The Fire Department will retain four fire stations: two in Belmont and two in San Carlos. It will also retain three engine companies and a truck company; 13 firefighters are the minimum needed to staff this equipment. Although the current budget covers day-to-day firefighting operations, the lack of adequate funds keeps aging equipment and vehicles in the field long after industry standards call for replacement to ensure that reliable equipment is available for emergency services.

Why act now?

The Fire Commission believes that budget cuts have reduced fire protection funding to a bare bones level. Furthermore, there are no reserves for unforeseen emergencies. As stated, past actions have been taken to reduce costs, however, the Fire Commission desires to add back the fourth engine. The plan is to create a 'cross staffed' company. Simple stated, the company would respond with an engine or truck, depending on the type of call. To institute the plan, the Fire Chief is proposing to add two firefighters, bringing the total to 15.



What happens if the Fire Protection Assessment is not adopted?

Obviously, we would be unable to restore the fourth engine to better meet the demands on service. We would be unable to staff at a level of fifteen firefighters for all schedule/shift needs, adding to the potential for temporary station closures due to staffing shortages, resulting in increased response times for fire and medical emergencies. The department would also have no reserves for emergencies, equipment, facility needs or replacement of aging vehicles.

When will an election be held?

Assessments are processed by all mail-in ballot; there are no polling stations as in a typical election. Ballots will be mailed September 28, 2006. You will have 45 days to return your ballot by mail or by hand delivery to the Belmont City Clerk at One Twin Pines Lane, Suite 375 during normal business hours.

What will it cost?

A single family residential owner will pay \$93 per year. Other categories exist and will be detailed in our second informational mailing. Please watch for the second mailing on or about the 21st of September.

[illegible]

Chief Douglas Fry
One Twin Pines Lane
Belmont, CA 94002